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ABSTRACT

The free jazz movement of the 1960s provided a rhetorical parallel in music to the verbal messages of black power and black nationalism. The use of Third World musical patterns represented an attempt to reinforce the revolutions in perceptions that black Americans held of themselves, their cultural heritage, and relationships to the rest of the nonwhite world. The three areas in which black musicians sought to throw off European musical concepts were harmony and melody, rhythm, and the nature of the instrumental source. The European harmonic system came to be seen as a symbol of the dominant white culture. Modal music, which is based on the concept of scalar improvisation rather then systemized chord progressions, is the structural form used by the free jazz movement. It has much in common with Third World musical sensibilities. In terms of rhythm, two approaches were used: the employment of drums as a melody instrument and an increased emphasis on polyrhythms. Finally, where European musical tradition places an emphasis on the purity of tone production on any given instrument, the jazz tradition has always emphasized individualized sound. The free jazz movement made wide use of angry sounds--rants, screams, cries, and moans--to form a part of the expressive message of this movement.
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THE CULTURAL - RHETORICAL ROLE OF FREE JAZZ : FORGING AN IDENTITY IN THE SIXTIES

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ABSTRACT

The reconstruction of a cultural heritage was a major task undertaken by black power and black nationalist movements of the 1950's and 1960's in the United States. The free jazz movement played a rhetorical role in this era by suggesting cultural linkages between black Americans and Third World nations. This was done by abandoning elements of the European musical heritage while embracing features of African, Asian, and Middle Eastern musical styles. The analysis of points of correspondence between free jazz and non-Western musics reveals that a distinct musical "message" was being communicated, a message underscoring and giving cultural life to the verbally expressed concerns of black nationalist movements.

This essay demonstrates that this message was communicated in three ways; the emphasis placed on melody over harmony, the "re-Africanization" of rythym, and the restructuring of ensemble sound through changes in instrumentation. The role played by these musical procedures was one of creating a new frame of reference through which the rising black consciousness announced its solidarity with the Third World.

An important facet of the racial turbulence of the 1960's was the vigorous growth of various black nationalist movements. One of the major constituent elements of black nationalist ideologies was the emphasis on cultural heritage.[1] Even the assimilationist civil rights movement paid homage to "black consciousness" even though the ultimate aim was to "contribute fully to the total culture and total life of the nation".[2] Corresponding to this revitalization of black consciousness, black music performed a rhetorical function in seeking its cultural roots and, in some cases, becoming associated with black nationalist ideologies.

This paper will focus on the jazz avant-garde of the late fifties and early sixties. This movement, known as "free jazz" or "new thing", often played a distinctly rhetorical role in the growth of black cultural awareness by emphasizing musical lines of association between black America and the Third World, especially Africa and the Middle East.

There have been few attempts to apply rhetorical analysis to instrumental musical forms.[3] Yet, in 1972 James Irvine and Walter Kirkpatrick provided a theoretical orientation toward music in rhetorical exchange that can be applied as well to instrumental music as to music with lyrics.[4] A central concept in their theory was <u>amplificative meaning</u>, defined as "a metaphoric process resulting from contrasting and complimentary associations of various musical elements".[5] The basic musical and extramusical elements they considered were; 1) the ethical reputation of the source, 2) the nature of the instrumental source, 3) lyrical structure, 4) melodic structure, 5) nature of the chord structure and progressions, 6) the structure of the communicative situation, and 7) rhythm.[6] To produce a rhetorical effect, any one of these factors could be combined with others in one of three ways; patterns unfamiliar

to those that are familiar, familiar patterns with other familiar patterns, and unfamiliar patterns with more unfamiliar patterns. This juxtaposition of familiar and unfamiliar patterns, then, would have its effect through the resolution of tensions or reinforcement of familiar patterns.

This paper, being essentially a movement study of free jazz rather than an analysis of one song, will argue that the free jazz movement gradually introduced musical references to the Third World in contrast to "mainstream" jazz practice, providing a contrast of unfamiliar and familiar patterns of musical variables. This introduction of unfamiliar patterns, furthermore, served, if only vaguely at the beginning, to celebrate the Third World roots of black culture and symbolize solidarity with the cultures of these emerging nations.

I. Two Precursors of Free Jazz

Black American music was the result of a cultural blend of European and African musical concepts.[7] To some extent, black American music, especially blues and jazz, has always retained echoes of its African origins. There has always been a struggle in the jazz world between the "Europeanization" and "Africanization" of the music. Two examples are; the smoothing of the rough edges of New Orleans jazz and its evolution into the popular big band swing of the thirties and fourties; and, the softening of bebop by the predominantly white West Coast "cool school" and the reaction this provoked in hard bop. As wide a field as jazz is, it is impossible to provide even a brief history here. However, two important movements should be considered before treating free jazz -

bebop of the fourties and hard bop (also known as funk or soul) of the fifties.

Since it sought to establish jazz as a legitimate art form, that is, it consciously experimented with form to expand the boundaries of the music, bebop was the first true avant-garde in jazz. Stemming from the war years of the fourties, bebop arose to challenge the dominance of big band swing. More than this, it was a challenge to the prevailing image of black music as a primitive folk music or simply a dance music, and the image of the black musician as a happy-go-lucky entertainer. Dizzy Gillespie's characterization of Louis Armstrong as a "plantation character" resented by many of the younger musicians was an example of this.[8] Bebop musicians thought of themselves as serious artists, not merely entertainers. With its deliberate break from big band swing, bebop was ideologically anti-assimilationist by virtue of its deliberate nonconformity.[9] As self-conscious artists, beboppers sought artistic respectability and recognition while maintaining jazz as an emphatically black art.

Jazz has always had, to one degree or another, improvisation as one of its central defining characteristics.[10] Popular swing bands limited opportunities for solo improvisation, bebop expanded them. In fact, bebop compositions were the first in jazz to be constructed specifically for improvisation.[11] The spontaneous invention of melody was at the core of the bebop claim to the status of art. The test of a bebop musician was how well he could compose a new melodic line over the chord structure of the tune while playing it. Bebop compositions would often start from a popular song such as "I Got Rhythm" or "Cherokee" and substitute more difficult augmented and diminished chords

for those of the original song. The melodist would then improvise over this structure, often at blazing tempos.[12] The melody lines created through this process were often long and reflected the underlying chord structure less than in previous jazz styles. Melody had a heavier emphasis than harmony in bebop.

Timekeeping style in bebop reflected the move away from dance music. Traditionally, the tempo had been kept by hitting the bass drum on every beat. Bebop drummers moved this ground beat up to the cymbals, using bass and snare drums for melodic embellishment rather than strict timekeeping.[13] This also liberated the drummer to set up polyrhythms, the most specifically African of bebop's characteristics. The 4/4 pulse "sizzled" on the cymbals and all four beats of the measure were accented evenly, tending to free the soloist from the need to refer to the common pattern of accented first and third beats popular in dance music.[14]

Significantly, this rebellious music issued forth at a time when young blacks were increasingly disillusioned with the prospects of assimilation into the mainstream of American society. World War II shattered illusions about the white world's willingness to grant equality to blacks. The clash of idealistic American war aims with the reality of continued segregation in the military and at home underscored for them the futility of the assimilationist position.[15] On the other hand, the emergence of Third World nations in the post-war era posed a challenge to white international supremacy and provided a boost to black self-image.[16] For these reasons, World War II was a watershed period that tipped the balance away from the assimilationist position toward an increasingly separatist point of view.[17] The attempt of the beboppers

to establish jazz as an art music echoed this. Though the impact of bebop on jazz was revolutionary, it was still firmly linked to European concepts of music, especially harmonic theory. To a great extent, bebop's link to the growing concern for black consciousness was largely attitudinal rather than musical.

Hard bop, funk, or soul deserves attention here for its limited use of African references and its overt pride in black American culture. Like bebop, the music was firmly tied to European harmonic theory. It was simpler music and not as innovative as bebop. The music made extensive use of early blues and gospel musical styles in order to makes its cultural references as obvious as possible. This attitude turned up often in song titles which led LeRoi Jones to characterize this movement as an attempt to "give value to terms of existence that were once considered not only valueless, but shameful." [18] In this was an almost aggressive reversal of the white image of the black. The term "soul" was a reference to ecstatic black religion and gospel music. "Funk" refered to "a stink usually associated with sex".[19] If those were attributes used by whites to stereotype blacks, hard bop would flaunt them rather than hide them. Songs such as "Moanin'" and "Better Git It in Yo' Soul" by Charles Mingus were ecstatic numbers refering to the passion of black religious experience. As in the titles above, spellings were sometimes deliberately designed to reflect black speech patterns, "Dis Heah" and "Dat Dere" by Bobby Timmons are further examples.[20]

A number of songs appeared with titles refering to African origins - "Tanganyika Strut" and "Dial Africa" by Wilbur Harden and John Coltrane, "Bantu" by Art Blakey, "Dinka Street" by Horace Silver, and "Airegin"

(Nigeria spelled backwards, the pronounciation suggests "origin") by Sonny Rollins - are a few examples. Despite this proliferation of African references, the music had little to do with genuine African sources, although it did attempt to capture early black American musical style which was closer to African roots. Hard bop, however, did point to black culture and heritage as a source of pride and, in this, functioned rhetorically by making obvious, even blatant, music and lifestyle that blacks had tended to hide from white eyes in the drive for assimilation. Musically, hard bop was a dead end for those who sought to establish jazz as an art music on black terms.[21]

II. A Rhetorical View of Free Jazz

The rhetorical efforts of free jazz will be considered in three essential areas in each of which black musicians sought to throw off European musical concepts - harmony and melody, rhythm, and the nature of the instrumental source.

A. Harmony and Melody

Though listed as separate variables by Irvine and Kirkpatrick, harmony and melody will be considered together here for they are tightly interwoven and the changes wrought by the free jazz movement were a matter of a shift of emphasis from one factor to the other.

As in bebop, free jazz musicians sought improvisational freedom through a radical expansion of the musical resources of jazz. One major element in this expansion of resources was the tendency to drift away from the conventions of the European musical system. Harmony, through

the system of chords and their tonic relationship, was from 1650 until the early twentieth century, the dominant characteristic of European art music as compared to musics of the rest of the world.[22] Twentieth century European composers such as Debussey, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Varesé blurred tonality in various ways in order to escape from the seemingly exhausted resources of the harmonic system. Not until jazz came to be thought of as an art music did its practioners likewise search for exit from the rules of chord progressions and tonality. Bebop, for all its rebelliousness, remained firmly tied to chord changes, the sine qua non of the European harmonic system.

No clear agreement exists on who "invented" free jazz. Lennie Tristano and Sun Ra are two often neglected artists who experimented with harmonic freedom in the early fifties. One clear starting point, however, is the work of Miles Davis in the late fifties which employed modes rather than chords as a harmonic base for improvisation. Modal music, of course, is not unknown in European music. Any student of Western music studies the Greek modal system which was important in European music until the Renaissance.[23] Post-Renaissance art music relied on only two scales - the major and minor. In this system, harmonic and contrapuntal combinations and key changes (shifting scales to a new tonal center) provided melodic variety and interest. A mode may be thought of as an extended chord. It contains so many notes that it is, in essence, an entire scale. Unlike a chord, a mode has no necessary relationship to other modes as in the tonic-dominant relationship. Because the mode is a single scale, there are no real chord changes in the music, rather, a drone or pedal point (a constant pitch behind the melody) is used to establish a tonal center.[24]

On his album Milestones in 1958, Davis employed modes in the title song, and in 1959, on the album Kind of Blue all of the pieces were modal explorations.[25] By using modes, Davis sought greater freedom to improvise melody while maintaining a clear tonality through the pedal point. The soloists, then, could invent long streams of melody without having to refer to chord changes. The importance of this clear break with jazz tradition goes a bit beyond a simple expansion of musical resources. Modal music is a structural form having much more in common with Third World musical sensibilities than with the European art music tradition for it is based on the concept of scalar improvisation rather than systematized chord progressions. Though harmony certainly exists in Asian and African musics, the emphasis is squarely on melody built from scales in no necessary relationship to one another as in the traditional European harmonic system.[26]

There is controversy over how conscious of Third World musics the jazz musicians of this period were. Micheal Budds has contended that this early interest in modal music was a spontaneous reaction to the strictures of the European harmonic system rather than a conscious attempt to fuse jazz and Third World musics. Only later in the sixties, stated Budds, were the similarities between these developments and African and Asian musics noted and developed by the musicians.[27] Budds, however, seems to have overlooked some clues that indicate a conscious attempt at this Third World fusion on the part of some musicians.

Budds noted that as early as 1951 John Coltrane used Slominsky's Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns as an excercise book.[28] Yet, he missed the point that Slominsky's book contained Indian and Middle Eastern scales as well as those in early European music and completely invented

scales. In 1956, Coltrane became associated with Ahmed Abdul-Malik, a Brooklyn-born Sudanese bass player who interested him in Middle Eastern music and religion.[29] Significantly, Malik produced an album, Jazz Sahara, in 1958 which was a fully conscious attempt to apply jazz improvisation (provided by saxophonist Johnny Griffin) to a Middle Eastern musical setting, complete with authentic instrumentation.[30] Coltrane was an integral member of the Miles Davis band that produced Kind of Blue and Milestones. It is, in fact, doubtful that Coltrane did not play some role in the production of these albums. Given his earlier interests, those contributions were very likely conscious.

Certainly, the awareness of the modal nature of Middle Eastern music was present by 1958. Another saxophonist, Yusef Lateef, was also adding conscious Middle Eastern flavors to his jazz at this time.[31] As noted above, hard bop through the fifties had been ripe with concern for the roots of black musical experience. It would be safe to assume a greater, not lesser, concern for black identity through music on the part of the more intellectually self-conscious avant-garde.

There was a second approach to the liberation of jazz from the European harmonic system during this period. This second way was represented in the music of Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor. The music of both of these artists did not use fixed chords or tonal centers, rather, these elements were shifted to fit the needs of the melodic direction of the music . As in modal music, the possibilities of improvised melody were expanded at the expense of harmony in the traditional European sense:

> Chords have always helped the jazz player to shape melody, maybe to an extent that he is now over-dependent on the chord.

> Ornette seems to depend on the overall tonality of the song as a point of departure for melody. By this I don't mean the key the music might be in. His pieces don't readily infer key. They could be in almost any key or no key. I mean that the overall sound which Ornette seems to use as a point of departure. This approach liberates the improvisor to sing his own song, without having to meet the deadline of any particular chord. Not that he can't be vertical and say a chord if he chooses. 32

Coleman employed chords rather than modes, but set few of them in advance. Sometimes he set no chords in advance. Instead of harmony controlling melody, the situation was exactly reversed in his music - the melodic direction of the music taken by the collective improvisation of the members of the group called forth the appropriate harmonic underpinning in an almost accidental fashion. Further, what was "appropriate" as a harmonic underpinning was not governed by any static system of chord relationships, but by the emotional content of the music produced by the free interaction of the musicians with one another. An excellent example of this can be found on Coleman's Free Jazz, a thirty-eight minute group improvisation by two jazz quartets.[33] No chords or tonic center was set in advance. The only direction provided for the musicians was a short melodic fragment used as a starting point. Coleman, unlike many free jazz artists, never explicitly acknowledged the influence of African music on his playing. Interestingly, however, the method employed on Free Jazz was not very different from the choral singing techniques used by some African tribes:

> A basic phrase design, a rough melodic outline, and a scale form the raw materials on which a singer may elaborate in his own way. Extra notes are stuck in, notes are omitted, certain pitches may be lengthened or shortened, inner motifs may be repeated, and so on... In bushmen and pygmy polyphony there is, then an intricate balance between individual creativity and the limits and controls of their sonic material. 34

The only real difference was that Coleman did not provide a scale for his musicians, only a melodic fragment upon which to improvise (the melodic fragment can be said to imply a scale). Even closer to the African form above was John Coltrane's Ascension.[35] Each instrument of the ensemble had the opportunity to solo based on a melodic fragment and scale provided by Coltrane at the outset. Between solos, the ensemble improvised simultaneously on these materials, providing a very thick and sometimes chaotic choral polyphony with no European harmonic base. Coltrane, a friend of African drummer Olatunji, was well versed in African musical tradition by this time. Despite experiments such as Ascension, Coltrane never abandoned modes as a harmonic base for improvisation during his career. He would, however, blur the modes he used by playing notes outside of the range of the modes in which he operated. Ornette Coleman routinely did this when using chords. This tendency to reach outside of the normal range of chords, modes, or scales for materials with which to build expressive musical statements also pointed toward Africa. In both musics, the expressive needs or melodic "story" was of the paramount importance. Concerning the regularity of scales in African music Fela Sowande stated:

> The "notes" that are grouped together to form what in Western Europe is known as a "scale" have a psychological and not an intellectual basis.... the word "scale" does not befit traditional Africa. [36]

Indeed, scales are only a loose formula in African music, especially sub-Saharan music. To be sure, scales are important in this music as a foundation, but musicians may alter or depart from them as the particular situation demands.[37] In free jazz also, the expression of the artist at

any given moment took priority over the requirements of any formal system of note choice.

Charles Keil refered to jazz and Third World musics as "processual", musics whose essential nature is rooted in situation and whose production can not be readily captured by European notational systems and methods of analysis.[38] Jazz, as an Afro-American music, never really sought to attain identity with traditional African music, but it has always contained this "processual" emphasis on the rendering of the emotional expressions of the moment.[39] The improvisational nature of jazz throughout its brief history resisted pressures toward excessive notation and arrangement of the music. The free jazz movement continued this tradition by loosening the grip that the European harmonic system had on the music. By so doing, free jazz pointed toward identification with Middle Eastern, Asian, and African cultures, drawing musical lines of association between black Americans and the former subjects of European colonization (there is a difference in degree between "identity" and "identification" as used here). Through the middle and late sixties this association was drawn more firmly and explicitly, paralleling the rising voices of black nationalism and separatism. Calling harmony a Western musical intellectualizing force, Clifford Taylor wrote in 1968:

> Rhythm and melody, that is, melody independent of or with no recognition of the existence of harmony, defines the soul of what is called the non-Western world...The Negro was unfortunate in being exposed to the controlling device of harmony, and we must know him through his African musical expression to know him at all. 40

The European harmonic system came to be seen as a symbol of the dominant white cuture, a symbol that needed to be transcended in the search for

identity.

B. Rhythm

The popular image of African music is drum music despite the fact that a wide range of musical instruments are used there. It is true, however, that the Guinea Coast of West Africa lays "particular emphasis on drumming as a dominant avenue of instrumental expression".[41] As for Africa in general, Bebey wrote that "the drum is, without question, the instrument that best expresses the inner feelings of black Africa".[42] African rhythm is extremely sophisticated. It may be in duple or triple meter, or alternate between both in the same song. It "may have some kind of metrical base, or it may irregular in conception. There are melodies in 'free' rhythm as well as others in 'strict' rhythm".[43]

In view of this, it is not surprising to find that free jazz attempted to "re-Africanize" rhythms. There were two basic manifestations of this - the use of drums as a melody instrument in a limited sense, and the increased emphasis on polyrhythms.

The drum is not often thought of as a melody instrument. In Africa, however, pitch changes in a drum beat can be shaped to send linguistic messages. Contrary to popular image, it is not the rhythm alone that transmits the message, but the change in pitch in combination with the rhythm. Yoruba drummers can reproduce all of the tones of speech.[44] Such "pitch drumming" became an important facet of the free jazz movement. Within the context of collective improvisation, each member of the group was open to contribute to the development of melody. Drummers such as Andrew Cyrille and Sonny Murray implied (and sometimes

left completely) meter in order to lend tonal color and melodic accents to the group sound. Others, such as Ed Blackwell, tuned their drums to suggest the deep and resonant sound of African drums.[45] This concern with percussive shadings and melodic contributions grew slowly but surely through the sixties. Until midway through that decade it had been rare to here any more exotic percussion instrument than an occasional conga or bongo. Then, suddenly, it seemed that African, Asian, and South American percussion instruments entered jazz en mass, a point that will be discussed in the next section.

The second manifestation of the revolution in rhythms was the increased emphasis on polyrhythms. Elvin Jones, the drummer in John Coltrane's band, represented better than anyone this use of more than one meter. Jones excelled in supplying two different rhythms simultaneously by keeping a 4/4 pulse on his cymbals while beating out eigth note triplets in 6/4 on the snare drums.[46] Meanwhile, Coltrane's phrasing on saxaphone would state yet another rhythm. The bass player could interact with any of these three rhythms, imply a fourth, or supply the drone of the mode. The overall effect was a swirling crosscurrent of rhythm that obscurred a regular pulse and led some critics to charge that the group didn't know how to keep time.[47] It was the tension caused by the polyrhythmic nature of the music that made it sound thickly textured and ready to fly apart. Compare this stacking of rhythms with the following comments on African drum style:

> In Africa stereotyped rhythmic patterns are also used, notably in the music of the large drum ensembles. Each player beats out a relatively simple pattern which he repeats with occasional variations. As more and more patterns are stacked up in simultaneous layers - something like geological strata cutting across cliffs and mesas - the rhythmic texture becomes incredibly complex. [48]

To heighten this effect, Coltrane, as well as Ornette Coleman, sometimes used two drummers and two bassists. This produced even more complex rhythmic crosscurrents approaching, but never attaining, the complexity of African drum style. To be sure, free jazz drumming never acheived a pure African feel, but it did attempt to draw lines of association between black American and African cultures by laying new emphasis on the complexity of jazz rhythm.

C. Tone Production and Instrumentation

Once again, two musical variables are being considered together because of their intimate relationship in the music. In African musical tradition, as in jazz, an individual's characteristic production of tone is a vital facet of the expressive content.

> The African musician is concerned with the art of playing an instrument and not the technique....the same kind of instrument may be played in a multitude of different ways; technique is very much a matter of individual taste. 49

> We can speak of A as having 440 vibrations/second, but the pitch will vary in Africa according to the singer's expressive interests. We are going to see obvious manifestations of this in the music of Ornette Coleman, for example, who says without hedging that he resents somone's complaint that he is "out of tune" because he selects different pitches for the same note at different times. 50

In both of the statements above it is clear that the African and European methods of approaching instrumentation and tone are quite different. European musical tradition placed an emphasis on the purity (an ideal) of tone production on any given instrument. In jazz tradition an individualized sound has always been an important part of the music.[51] Growls, smears, slides, rasps, and gurglings have always played a great

role in jazz and in African music as an imitation of the human voice.[52] The free jazz movement emphasized this with a vengeance. Wide use made of "angry" sounds - rants, screams, cries, and moans - to form a part of the expressive message of this music.[53] This was by no means all there was to this music, but in the social atmosphere of the sixties, it was the most noticed and striking aspect. The turbulent energy generated by such music caused Nat Hentoff to characterize Coltrane's collaborations with Pharoah Sanders "speaking in tongues" in order to convey verbally the raw , blistering emotion of the music.[54] Here, it was not so much the content of the emotions projected, but the concern for an individual expression that pointed back to African musical sensibilities.

Another facet of this concern with individual tone color was reflected in instrumentation. "Melodic" drum styles and polyrhythms were two instances of a percussion revolution extending through the sixties. Though the pioneer drummers of free jazz rarely played anything other than a standard drum kit, their drumming concept lent itself to the introduction of exotic percussion instruments later in the decade. Often a percussion specialist, in addition to a jazz drummer, was added to ensembles to thicken the rhythm. Sometimes two drummers were used. Coltrane, commenting on his addition of drummer Rashied Ali to his group, stated: "I feel the need for more time, more rhythm all around me and with more than one drummer the rhythm can be more multidirectional".[55] Disciples of Coltrane followed in his footsteps. Pharoah Sanders employed African percussion instruments such as the balaphone on his records in the late sixties.[56] The first five minutes of Archie Shepp's recorded performance at the Donauschingen Jazz Festival in 1967 cosisted of a bass solo accompanied by a variety of African and Latin American percussion

instruments.[57] By the end of the sixties, Miles Davis used three drummers and an additional percussionist to provided crosscurrents on his album Bitches Brew.[58] By that time, a bewildering variety of African, Asian, and Latin American percussion instruments were being used by jazz artists.[59]

Two significant musical instruments gained wide popularity in jazz through this era, the flute and the soprano saxophone. Both were treated as novelty or incidental instruments until the free jazz movement and both, significantly, can be associated with Third World musics. Before the free jazz era, there had been only one significant musician whose primary instrument was the soprano sax, Dixieland artist Sidney Bechet(at least he played about as often as his clarinet). The tone he produced on the soprano was round and liquid, not unlike a clarinet, but with a "buzzy" quality. The pivotal point in the subsequent explosion in the popularity of this instrument was Coltrane's recording of "My Favorite Things".[60] The sound was quite different from Bechet's - a dry, nasal, "reedy", almost painfully squeezed sound. This sound was not due to any inability on Coltrane's part to master the instrument; rather, his desire to produce a Middle Eastern sound on it. This is not surprising when one recalls Coltrane's earlier association with Ahmed Abdul-Malik. Coltrane's tone on soprano was strikingly close to that of a shehenai, an Islamic double reed instrument of religious significance.[61] Combined with the restructuring of "My Favorite Things" into modes, the overall sound was exotic and decidedly Middle Eastern. Another saxophonist Yusef Lateef even began to play the shehenai itself on some of his records.[62]

The flute also grew in popularity due both to Lateef and Eric Dolphy (who often worked with John Coltrane). Previously the flute had been

rarely used in jazz because of its light tone. Yet, the flute, second to the drum , is "the most universal instrument in all African music".[63] Given the interests of both Lateef and Dolphy in African and Asian musics , it was not surprising that the flute increased in importance as a reference to the African heritage.[64] Though the flute has remained a vital force in jazz, it is still rare to find a jazz musician who plays it as a primary instrument. Many, however, play it as a second instrument. The soprano sax, on the other hand, has become a staple in jazz. Many musicians play the soprano as their prefered instrument, and most of those with the dry, thin sound pioneered by John Coltrane.

One final alteration of group instrumentation was significant through this period - the de-emphasis of the piano. From the days of ragtime and stride, the piano was a staple of the ensemble sound of jazz. Based on tempered European scales, however, the piano could become a serious obstruction to the artist who desired to abandon European harmonic structure. The piano, because of its inability to play "blue notes", had gradually "Eurpeanized" jazz to the point that the very concept of a blue note was misunderstood by the hard bop musicians of the fifties.[65] The de-emphasis of the piano, then, was felt to be necessary to facilitate a return to authentic black music. Ornette Coleman almost never worked with a piano. John Coltrane more gradually worked away from it. Though he never completely abandoned the keyboard, his pianist would often stop playing behind Coltrane's solos so that he would be free of the harmonic outlines that the piano almost inevitably provided.[66]

With the Third World emphasis of melody and rhythm over harmony in free jazz, the de-emphasis of piano followed logically. Even so, there were some pianists of note in the movement. Most, such as Coltrane's

pianist McCoy Tyner, played modally. Others, Sun Ra and Cecil Taylor among them, treated the piano in a distinctly percussive fashion.[67] Taylor, a long neglected leader of the free jazz movement, was conservatory trained and united the European art music approach to circumventing the traditional harmonic system - the use of tone clusters and dodecophonic scales - with the strong rhythmic foundation of the African tradition.[68] For the most part, however, free jazz groups played in a musical environment where the piano was no longer a required instrument. The "second wave" of free jazz artists - Archie Shepp, John Tchicai, Marion Brown, Sam Rivers, Albert Ayler, and the Art Ensemble of Chicago - rarely employed pianists.

III. Free Jazz and Black Identity

Over a period of ten years, from 1957 to 1967, the free jazz movement grew from rumors and rustlings of change to a fully worked out jazz style with clear overtones of black nationalism. This musical revolution paralleled closely the development of the civil rights movement through this period. In both the musical and social revolutions, the concepts of heritage and racial identity of black Americans grew in importance and separatist tendencies began to overcome the assimilationist position. Just as in the civil rights movement, it is important to bear in mind that the militants and nationalists were only a part of the larger scene. There were other jazz styles extant in the sixties, everything from Dixieland to bebop, but the free jazz movement was the cutting edge that garnered attention not only for its musical radicalism, but also for its verbal stance of protest.

Archie Shepp, a saxophonist who followed in Coltrane's musical footsteps, was the most outspoken of the musicians on the relationship between free jazz and the social scene: "We are only an extension of that entire civil rights-Black Muslim-black nationalist movement that is taking place in America. That is fundamental to our music".[69] Extending this to an internationalist perspective, Shepp state: "We see jazz as antiwar; it is opposed to Vietnam; it is for Cuba; it is for the liberation of all people." 70 Shepp's rhetoric was strongly Marxist and emphasized the unity of black Americans with the Third World nations. Cecil Taylor also was adamantly political. Calling at one point for black musicians to end their associations with white-owned record companies, music unions, and trade journals, he stated: "We're no longer reflecting or vibrating to the white energy principle. The point is: we know who we are. We have a whole history of music in this country".[71]

In this point of view Shepp and Taylor reflected the rhetoric of Malcolm X and Stokely Carmicheal in calling for black unity, strength, and control of resources. Like these, Taylor's concept of unity applied to blacks everywhere in the world:

> I'm saying that essentially there is no difference, as long as you're black, where you come from; that the thing that unites us is the sameness of the oppression that we have undergone at the hands of the white man, no matter where we are from. That's one of the things that binds us. 72

There is a sense of identity in the above statement through suffering. But the music also emphasized a more positive identity through creativity. Jazz was certainly the most visible contribution of blacks to American culture. It was one of the few areas of life, before the sixties, where blacks could dominate. This gave jazz an importance as a positive image

of black accomplishment. In his speech before the founding meeting of the Organization of Afro-American Unity, Malcolm X used the example of jazz to demonstrate the strength of black spirit:

> You'd be surprised what will come out of the bosom of the black man. I've seen it happen. I've seen black musicians when they'd be jamming at a session with white musicians - a whole lot of difference. The white musician can jam if he's got some sheet music in front of him. He can jam on something that he's heard jammed before. But that black musician, he picks up his horn and starts blowing some sounds that he never thought of before. He improvises, he creates, it comes from within. It's his soul; it that soul music. It's the only area on the American scene where the black has been free to create. And he has mastered it. He has shown that he can come up with something that nobody ever thought of on his own. 73

The free jazz movement, as bebop before it, consciously cultivated the image of the black creator and artist. The music became a part of the surge to celebrate black culture and find strength and identity within that tradition.

The references to Third World musics were part and parcel of this expression of cultural pride as well as a symbol of solidarity with those areas of the world that, like the black American, had fallen under white European domination. The view of blacks as colonial subjects had wide currency in Black Panther and Black Muslim rhetoric.[74] The unity with the Third World was expressed in the music of artists who were not outspoken in a political sense. Though Coltrane's music was more religiously motivated than political, his music had become more and more aligned with African and Asian musical concepts. Though he was a soft-spoken man not given to political statements, his music made it abundantly clear that the God to which he dedicated his music was Eastern. Indeed, Coltrane was interested in Islam before he finally converted to

Hinduism.

The heart of black nationalism was concerned with cultural identity as much as with any concrete political goals:

> The rhetoric of black power is essentially a call for the black man to rediscover himself as a substantial human being...The new image had to promote confidence and independence; it was of necessity a "non-white" image. 75

Richard Gregg likened the rhetoric of black power to a form of exhortation; that is, a rhetoric not leading to judgement but concerned with creating a new frame of reference and imposing a new set of perceptions and values. The same can be said of the contribution of free jazz to the atmosphere of the sixties. Its efforts to depart from traditional European musical concepts by employing the more unfamiliar patterns of Third World musics represented an attempt to reinforce the revolution in perceptions that black Americans held of themselves, their cultural heritage, and relationships to the rest of the "non-white" world. It provided a rhetorical parallel in music to the verbal messages of black power and black nationalism.

Like black nationalism too, free jazz was caught between two worlds. Though there were African references, the music could never be truly African. The more European concept of soloist remained an essential part of jazz despite the numerous attempts at African style collective improvisation. Like black nationalist movements, free jazz could point toward Third World roots and announce solidarity, but it had to live and survive in the realities of America.

FOOTNOTES

1. Alphonso Pinkney, Red, Black, and Green : Black Nationalism in the United States. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976) p.3-8.

2. Malcolm X vs. James Farmer, debate at Cornell University, March 7, 1962, from Negro Protest Thought in the Twentieth Century, eds. Francis Roderick and August Meier, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965) p.375. This article provides a good view of the differences and similarities between separatist and assimilationist positions. Another good comparison would be afforded by reading Stokely Carmicheal and Charles Hamilton, Black Power, (NY: Random House, 1967) p.34-56 along side Martin Luther King, Where Do We Go From Here, (NY: Harper and Row, 1967) p.44-64.

3. Gerard LeCoat, "The Rhetorical Element in Monteverdi's Combattimento : A Study in Harmonic Oratory", Western Speech, XXXIX#3 (Summer, 1975) p.165-174. Also Gerard LeCoat, "Music and the Three Appeals of Classical Rhetoric", QJS, 62#2 (April, 1976) p.157-166.

4. James Irvine and Walter Kirkpatrick, "The Musical Form in Rhetorical Exchange : Theoretical Considerations", QJS, 58#3 (October, 1972) p.272-284.

5. Irvine and Kirkpatrick, p.273-274.

6. Irvine and Kirkpatrick, p.274-277.

7. James Lincoln Collier, The Making of Jazz, (NY: Dell, 1978) p.63.

8. cited in Leroy Ostransky, Understanding Jazz, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977) p.200.

9. LeRoi Jones, Blues People, (NY: Morrow, 1963) p.181-182. The non-conformist element in bebop was well documented in Howard Becker, "The Professional Jazz Musician and His Audience", in The Sounds of Social Change, eds. R. Serge Denisoff and Richard Peterson, (NY: Rand, McNally, 1972) p.248-260.

10. Ostransky, p.23-43.

11. Collier, p.376.

12. Mark Gridley, Jazz Styles, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1978) p.119-122.

13. Collier, p.347 contains a lucid explanation of bebop rhythmic style.

14. John Mehegan, "The ABC's of New Jazz", Saturday Review, 39(November 10, 1956) p.34.

15. Charles Silberman, Crisis in Black and White, (NY: Vintage, 1964) p.58-62.

16. Harold Issacs, The New World of the American Negro, (NY: Day, 1963) p.6-8. Also Rupert Emerson and Martin Kilson, "The American Dilemma in a Changing World : The Rise of Africa and the Negro American", in The Afro-Americans, ed. Ross Baker, (NY: Van Nostrand, 1970) p.429-453.

17. It should be understood that separatist and assimilationist positions have existed among black Americans for as long they have existed in this country. See Raymond Hall, Black Separatism in the United States, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1978) p.21-37.

18. Jones, Blues People, p.219.

19. Jones, Blues People, p.219.

20. Jones, Blues People, p.216-219 and Frank Kofsky, Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music, (NY: Pathfinder, 1970) p.46-51 discuss hard bop song titles and their significance.

21. The fifties was also a time of experimentation with the fusion of jazz and classical idioms in what is known as "third sream" music. There were many successful players of this music, most notably, the Modern Jazz Quartet. These musicians sought artistic respectibility but not in black terms exclusively.

22. see Gerhard Albersheim, "The Sense of Space in Tonal and Atonal Music", Journal of Aesthetics and Criticism, XIX#1 (Fall 1960) p.17-30.

23. David Reck, Music of the Whole Earth, (NY: Scribner's, 1977) p.218.

24. Gridley, p.312-313. See also Micheal Budds, Jazz in the Sixties, (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1978) p.44-45.

25. Miles Davis, Milestones, Columbia PC9428, 1958. _____, Kind of Blue , Columbia CS8163, 1959.

26. J.H. Nketia, "The Musical Languages of Subsaharan Africa", African Music, procedings of UNESCO conference in Cameroon, February 1970, (Paris: La Revue Musicale,1972) p. 12-17.

27. Budds, p.50-51.

28. Budds, p.50.

29. Bill Cole, John Coltrane, (NY: Schirmir, 1976) p.64.

30. Ahmed Abdul-Malik, Jazz Sahara, Riverside12-287, 1958.

31. See Yusef Lateef, Morning, Savoy SJL2205, 1976 (reissue of material recorded April 1957) and Lateef, Gong, Savoy 2226, 1978 (reissue of material recorded in October 1957). The Middle Eastern musical influence was probably associated with Black Muslim activity which was important in the community of jazz musicians from the fourties on.

For the Muslim influence among jazz musicians see Ben Sidran, Black Talk, (NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971) p.82.

32. George Russell, "Ornette Coleman and Tonality", Jazz Review, June 1960 p.9.

33. Ornette Coleman, Free Jazz, Atlantic 1364, 1960.

34. Reck, p.306.

35. John Coltrane, Ascension, ABC IMpulse A-95, 1965.

36. Fela Sowande, "The Role of Music in Traditional African Society", UNESCO conference, p.66.

37. Nketia, p.13-14.

38. Charles Keil, "Motion and Feeling Through Music", Journal of Aesthetics and Criticism , XXIV#3 (Spring 1966) p.337-349.

39. Francis Bebey, African Music : A People's Art, (NY: Lawrence Hill, 1975) p.3-20. Also see John Storm Roberts, Black Music in Two Worlds, (NY: Preager, 1972) p.3-8.

40. Clifford Taylor,"The Design of Culture", Encounter, 31(November 1968) p.41-48.

41. Nketia,p.38.

42. Bebey, p.92.

43. Nketia, p.18.

44. Bebey, p.93-98. Also see George Kakoma, "Musical Traditions of East Africa", UNESCO, p.84-88. John Blacking, "Field Work in African Music" in Reflections on Afro-American Music, ed. Dominique-Rene de Lerma, (Kent: Kent State Univ. Press, 1973) p.214-215.

45. A good example of this African drum style can be heard on "T&T" from Ornette Coleman, Ornette!, Atlantic 1378, 1961.

46. Complicating this rhythmic stew was Jones' tendency to "drag" the 4/4 beat on cymbals so that it was a fraction "off". See Keil, p.345.

47. LeRoi Jones, Black Music, (NY: Morrow, 1969) p.11-20.

48. Reck, p.176.

49. Bebey, p.132.

50. David Baker, "A Periodization of Black Musical History", in DeLerma, Reflections on Afro-American Music, p.148.

51. See Ostransky, p.23-43 and Gridley, p. 13-20.

52. Ostransky, p.80-81; Sidran, p.25; Jones, Black Music, p.77-78.

53. See comments on Archie Shepp by Frank Tirro, Jazz : A History, (NY: Norton, 1977) p.358.

54. Nat Hentoff, liner notes, John Coltrane, Meditations, ABC Impulse AS9110, 1965.

55. Coltrane, Meditations.

56. Pharoah Sanders, Black Unity, ABC Impulse AS9219, 1972.

57. Archie Shepp, Live at the Donauschingen Festival, BASF-MPS 20651, 1967.

58. Miles Davis, Bitches Brew, Columbia GP26, 1969.

59. Budds, p.16-24.

60. John Coltrane, My Favorite Things, Atlantic 1361, 1960.

61. Reck, p.47.

62. Yusef Lateef, Live at Pep's, ABC Impulse AS69, 1964.

63. Bebey, p.6[illegible] and Budds, p.16.

64. Vladimir Simosko and Barry Tepperman, Eric Dolphy : A Musical Biography and Discography, (Washington: Smithsonian Press, 1974) p.10-18.

65. See Collier, p.5-6 and 38-39. Many bop players began to use minor thirds and sevenths thinking they were blue notes, see p. 438-439.

66. Though Coltrane continued to use piano. he told Frank Kofsky in an interview that "we don't follow what the piano does any more" and that "I like it for its backdrop, its sound". Kofsky, p.231.

67. Archie Shepp on Cecil Taylor: "Cecil plays the piano like a drum, he gets rhythms out of it like a drum, rhythm and melody...A throwback in the direction of the African influences on the music". Cited in Jones, Black Music, p.152.

68. Gridley, p.217-219.

69. Cited in Kofsky, p.64.

70. Cecil Taylor, "Point of Contact", Downbeat Yearbook, 1966, p.19-31.

71. Cecil Taylor, p. 27.

72. Cited in Kofsky, p.63.

73. George Breitman, The Last Year of Malcolm X, (NY: Hill, 1976) p.105-106.

74. Robert Scott, "Justifying Violence : The Rhetoric of Black Power", Central Speech, XIX#2 (Summer 1968)p.96-104. Karyln Kohrs Campbell, "The Rhetoric of Black Nationalism : A Case Study in Self-Conscious Criticism", Central Speech, XXII#3 (Fall 1971) p.151-160. Both of the articles above discuss the "black colony in America" theme of black nationalist rhetoric. See also Raymond Hall, p.3 and 115-116.

75. Richard Gregg, A. Jackson McCormack, and Douglas Pederson, "The Rhetoric of Black Power : A Street Level Interpretation", QJS, 55#2 (April 1969) p.152. Black power and black nationalist groups sought acceptance on their terms, a point essential to the concept of identity - see Parke Burgess, "The Rhetoric of Black Power : A Moral Demand?", QJS, 54#2 (April 1968) p.130.